

DIGEST OF A POLICY STATEMENT ON EXECUTIVE DEVELOPMENT

(Submitted to the CSC to Meet Reporting Requirements in
the Guidelines for Executive Development in the Federal Service)

Basic Considerations in a Personal Developmental Program

It may be conceded that cream rises to the top and so do people of recognized superior ability. There is no assurance, however, that random exposure of employees to training courses and assignments will produce the best qualified and seasoned candidates for the more senior positions. Moreover, conclusions about the potential of specific individuals must be constantly re-examined as they move up in the hierarchy.

The Agency should guard against development for development sake, arousing personal expectancies that cannot be met. It should simultaneously move on two fronts: develop the more gifted for higher positions of managerial responsibility and develop people in the skills they will need in their current positions or in jobs of higher responsibility below the executive level.

Specific developmental actions in individual cases should fit organizational needs, as seen by Deputy Directors and career service officials.

Executive and Pre-Executive Development

Executive development is a dual process: planning the improvement of individuals who have already become executives (supergrades in the Federal Government) and developing designated mid-officers and senior officers who have the potential to be executives.

Executives can materially benefit from formal internal and external training experiences, but their utilization and development chiefly depend upon periodic reviews of their effectiveness. Uninterrupted tenure of executives for years in one job or place can be counterproductive, despite the expertise gained on the job. The practice frequently observed in the business world of annually examining the status, current usage and prospective usefulness of each individual could be applied productively within the Agency.

Central to an effective program of executive development is the identification and personal development of well-qualified mid-career and senior officers in the Grades GS 13-15. Many promising employees at these grade levels have spent most of their careers acquiring substantive expertise. More often than not, they have experienced over the years a number of assignments and training courses; but their past preoccupation

with substance causes the mid-career stage to be a critical time for them to obtain a fairly comprehensive view of managerial skills and principles. Since instruction and experiential learning in the informational, managerial and behavioral sciences are among OTR's capabilities, formal training is a valuable resource at this time in their development. Closer linkage of training and personal development, therefore, becomes a key element in future Agency planning.

Career Services to Implement Individual Development

The Agency has several functional career services formally constituted to competitively review all employees under their jurisdiction with respect to promotions, assignments and developmental opportunities. These units are directly responsible to a career service head who is also a senior operating official, and career service heads are directly responsible to a Deputy Director of the Agency. Career service boards and panels, comprised of Agency executives and operating officials, make the competitive reviews and decisions alluded to, and supportive personnel -- career management officers, personnel officials, training officers and other supportive or staff personnel -- are designated to help boards and panels; meet regularly with careerists to discuss their personnel needs and interests; and to implement specific decisions or actions of the career service boards and panels.

The Agency will rely upon the career services to periodically evaluate the potential of careerists within their jurisdictions for executive positions and to specify individualized developmental training and assignments for those concerned. We are confident that this process of individualized review and planning can better achieve the purposes of the Agency and the Federal Guidelines than the development of individual career plans in a formal or document. (In earlier years, the Agency extensively experimented with elaborate individual career plans and found them to be largely unsuccessful.)

The career service heads and members of the career service boards and panels are links between supervisors and the Agency's top executives. This linkage of line officers -- supervisors, career service officials, Deputy Directors, Executive Director-Comptroller and the Director -- will be an important factor in insuring the uniform and responsible implementation of policies decided upon by the EMRB (consisting of the Executive Director-Comptroller and Deputy Directors).

Systematic Agency-wide Efforts for Identifying Executive Candidates; Individual Personal Development; and Use of Training Resources

To accomplish the essentials of an improved developmental program and to achieve the principal features of the Federal Guidelines for Executive Development, the Agency needs to systematically engage in the individual

planning of developmental training and assignments for employees with executive potential.

Specific developmental programs of the career services should be tailored to their individual needs and problems, but certain common approaches and criteria should be observed by all in order to assure the success of the developmental effort and to achieve Agency-wide objectives. Each career service should project the amount of upward movement in the future and examine the capability of promising careerists to fill positions of responsibility in Grades GS-15 and above. Thereafter, each career service should establish specific training, assignments and other planned developmental activities for each careerist identified for executive development. In identifying assignments and training, effort should be made to fill observable gaps in the career experience of individual employees and to determine means of overcoming relative weaknesses in the skills and abilities of otherwise well-qualified employees with executive potential. Each career service should be encouraged to establish general norms or guidelines covering the preferred kinds of training and assignments that would be most beneficial in furthering the development of executive candidates.